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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 5853  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 3734  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2223  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 6944  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0866  
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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND  
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Iraq, Syria/Italy,  
Syria/Malaysia, Israel/Palestinians, Lebanon, Rice (3/30-4/2)

11. Summary: Syrian papers reported Vice President Shara's meeting with a delegation representing the Iraqi Islamic Party. Headlines featured Shara's statement expressing the importance of maintaining Iraq's territorial integrity and forming a government of national unity, and rejection of attempts to drive a wedge among sons of one homeland.

Syrian papers also reported that Romano Prodi, President of the Central Left Coalition in Italy, intends to cooperate effectively with the Syrian leadership if his coalition wins in the upcoming elections, underlining Syria's importance and effective role in the Middle East.

Syrian papers featured a televised interview with Dr. Mohsen Bilal, Minister of Information, who said that "Syria enjoys all factors of strength and invincibility and is capable of resisting the pressures which aim at isolating it. Regarding the situation in Iraq, the minister underlined that "the occupation of Iraq comes within a larger project that aims at drowning the region in so-called creative chaos and at instigating civil war and sectarian division to partition the region, to make it easier to loots its resources. On Lebanon, the minister said that "Lebanon would remain Syria's twin brother and it is in the interests of both countries to have distinguished relations."

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"Vice President Shara meets a delegation from the Iraqi Islamic Party and reiterates the importance of maintaining Iraq's territorial integrity and forming a national government"  
(Government-owned Al-Thawra, 3/30)

"President Asad reviews with a delegation of Malaysian experts mechanisms of administrative, economic and institutional reform"  
(Government-owned Tishreen, 4/2)

"Hailing the reform steps in Syria, President of the Central Left

Coalition in Italy Prodi: Syria's role in the Middle East is constructive and fruitful" (Government-owned Tishreen, 4/2)

"Berri, Speaker of Lebanese Parliament, accuses the Parliamentary majority of working to foil the national dialogue. Oun calls on the government to shoulder its responsibilities or resign. A number of MPs express satisfaction over President Lahoud's stances" (Government-owned Tishreen, 4/2)

"Information Minister Bilal: Syria will not open its doors to any party that opposes the Lebanese resistance" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 4/2)

"Extensive discontent over the stance of the 'March 14' powers, who assailed the President and the Lebanese resistance. Lahoud: They have joined suspicious projects; they are obstructing all attempts to achieve reconciliation and construction. Finish [Minister of Electricity]: The resistance is the greater achievement. Franjieh [former MP]: No one can fool the Lebanese People. Murad [former MP]: No early parliamentary elections. Sa'd [Lebanese MP]: Why don't they resign?" (Government-owned Tishreen 4/1)

"Tension prevails in Lebanon over PM Al-Saniora's statement in Khartoum about the resistance. Nasrallah [SecGen of Hizbollah]: We will cut the hand of the one who tries to disarm the resistance " (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 3/30)

"At least three Palestinians killed, 36 wounded following the martyrdom operation in the Kadomim settlement" (Government-owned Tishreen, 4/1)

"Palestinian Prime Minister Haniyyah calls for calm and withdrawal of all armed forces from Gaza streets" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 4/2)

"An information source denies any tense meeting between President Asad and Palestinian President Abbas, saying that talks in Khartoum were very cordial. Palestinians commemorate Land Day. Mashal: Hamas insists on its platform" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 3/30)

"Rice is received with anti-war demonstrations in Britain" (Government-owned Tishreen, 4/1)

"Rice acknowledges that the US committed thousands of tactical mistakes in the war on Iraq. Zbigniew Brzezinski [Former US President Jimmy Carter's National Security Adviser] offered Bush a plan on pullout from Iraq" (Government-owned Tishreen, 4/1)

### 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"Dissidents s from the Homeland"  
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Isam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (4/1): "It is not unusual to see opposition forces in every country in the world, but what is unusual and even disastrous is that these forces sometimes seek the help of foreign forces against governments and authorities, which represent sovereignty, the constitution, and nationalism....

"Regrettably, our Arab nation has been plagued with such forces, which conspire against the homeland and its leaders under the pretext of defending the homeland....

"How can such forces seek the help of a superpower against the homeland and come on the back of a US tank to take power.... These forces try to distort reality, mislead public opinion, and buy consciences....

"The Arab street knows those who seek the help of foreign forces against their homeland and their nation and try to undermine national unity in this or that country.... Everybody has the

right to object to certain policies and positions adopted by their governments, because homelands are built by diverse opinions.... Any attempt to confiscate dialogue and decision-making has nothing to do with democracy...."

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"A Democracy that Assassinate Peace"

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Samir al-Shibani, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, commented (4/1): "The United Nations and its resolutions are used by the only superpower to dominate the entire world...."

"Criminals who were chased by international courts have turned into peace heroes.... The general who committed the Sabra and Shatila massacre [in Lebanon] has turned into a brave man of peace...."

"Washington and many other world capitals have congratulated Olmert on Qadima's victory in the elections, ignoring the fact that when he was Mayor of Jerusalem, he changed the historical features of the occupied city with the aim of Judaizing it.... At the same time, the HAMAS victory in the Palestinian elections is viewed by some as a violation of democracy."

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"The Significance of Kadima's Victory"

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Ahmad Hamadah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (3/31): "Israeli Prime Minister Olmert is adopting extremist and racist policies and trying to impose a fait accompli policy on the Palestinians and the international community...."

"The victory scored by the Qadima Party in the recent Israeli parliamentary elections shows that Israelis still insist on encroaching upon Arab rights and occupying Arab territories...."

"The Israeli public voted for Olmert's plan to demarcate Israel's borders unilaterally in conflict international legitimacy and the resolutions of the UN Security Council.... This victory means that the occupied Arab territories will remain under occupation during the next four years because this party's plans are based on two key points:

"First, there will be Jewish expansion at the expense of the territories of the presumed Palestinian state by annexing the major settlements and Jerusalem for alleged demographic reasons and by annexing the Jordan Valley for false security reasons. Thus, there will be no Palestinian state within the borders that existed in June 1967 and no East Jerusalem as a capital of that state.

"Second, Kadima will decide the identity of the Israeli entity as a Jewish entity at the expense of the Arab Palestinian people in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and the 1948-occupied land. In other words, the results of the elections were the most obvious plan to declare war on the Palestinian people's legitimate rights and serve the Zionist project."

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